

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBU #2126/01 3020244
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 290244Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9586
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6659
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 6540
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1564
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ OCT MONTEVIDEO 6869
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0880
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 0313
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 1464
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 1930
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 002126

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AR](#)
SUBJECT: EXIT POLLS SAY CRISTINA KIRCHNER BECOME
ARGENTINA'S FIRST ELECTED FEMALE PRESIDENT

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 02086 (B) BUENOS AIRES 2090

11. (SBU) Summary: According to exit polls and the partial official vote tally, First Lady and Senator Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner (CFK) appears to have been voted the next president of Argentina in the October 28 national election. With 45.41% of the ballot boxes counted, CFK had a preliminary 43.63% of the vote, over twenty points ahead of the next candidate, Elisa Carrio. CFK claimed victory, and several of her opponents conceded defeat (but, so far, likely runner-up Carrio has not/not). According to press reports, Brazilian President Lula da Silva and Uruguayan President Vasquez have already called to congratulate CFK on her presumed victory. Congressional results will take longer to tally, in part because of the complicated formula used to allocate seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Given Argentines' tendency to vote straight party tickets, it appears likely that Kirchner's Victory Front Party (FPV) consolidated its control of Congress by sweeping the majority of the available seats in both the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. The opposition, however, appeared to have done well in the big cities. End Summary.

Preliminary Election Results

12. (U) Beginning at 1900 local time, the moment when the last polling stations closed, media reported that exit polls indicated that First Lady and Senator Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner had won the October 28 presidential election with over 40% of the vote and more than a twenty-point lead over the next candidate. Indeed, one major exit poll gave CFK 46.3% of the vote and only 23.7% to Elisa Carrio. The official provisional count started trickling out after 2130 local time, and as of 0100 on October 29, with 45.14% of the ballot boxes counted, CFK had a preliminary 43.63% of the vote, over twenty points ahead of the next candidate -- currently Carrio in second place with 20.89% and Lavagna in third with 18.95%. If confirmed with final tallies, CFK will be the first elected female president of Argentina. (Juan Domingo Peron's widow Isabel Peron, who was Vice President at

the time of his death, served as president from 1974-76. She was overthrown by a military coup in March 1976.)

¶3. (U) According to preliminary results, the opposition did very well in the Federal Capital, Cordoba and Rosario, while CFK scored very strongly in Buenos Aires province, which accounts for about 39% of the country's population.

¶4. (U) Around 2200 local time, CFK appeared at her bunker at the Intercontinental Hotel and declared victory, saying "We have won by a wide margin, perhaps the biggest margin between first and second place since the return of democracy." She said the elections represented a victory for all Argentines, and that the margin of victory implied an even greater responsibility for her. She invited political participation by young people, regardless of their political affiliation. She directed some words to her "sisters of gender," and praised her husband, her "partner in life," noting that thanks to his successful administration, she would assume the presidency under much better circumstances than he did in ¶2003. She called for an end to hatred and rancor and called for united efforts to build a new Argentina.

¶5. (U) Of a field of 14 candidates, all of CFK's major opponents, including Roberto Lavagna (UNA), Alberto Rodriguez-Saa (Frejuli), and Jorge Sobisch (MPU) have conceded defeat. Likely second-place finisher Elisa Carrio, as of midnight, has not/not conceded yet. Brazilian President Lula da Silva and Uruguayan President Tabare Vasquez reportedly called to congratulate CFK within hours of the closing of polls (in Lula's case, within minutes).

Congressional Races

¶6. (SBU) Congressional results will take longer to tally, in part because of the complicated D'Hont formula used to allocate seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Given Argentines' tendency to vote straight party tickets, it appears likely that Kirchner's Victory Front Party (FPV) deepened its control of Congress by sweeping the majority of the available seats in both the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. Prior to this election, Kirchner's FPV held 41 out of 72 seats in the Senate and 111 out of 258 seats in the Chamber of Deputies (where it relied on shifting alliances to obtain congressional majorities). The Chamber had 130 seats up for grabs, and it was widely expected that enough FPV candidates would ride CFK's coattails to give the FPV a majority in the Chamber as well as the Senate. Septel will provide more details on the congressional races.

Opposition Complaints

¶7. (SBU) In Argentina, political parties are responsible for printing and providing ballots for their candidates. In the voting booth, voters choose from stacks of ballots and insert them in the envelopes that they deposit in the ballot box. Voting across party lines is not a common practice, but to do so, voters can clip the names of candidates from different slates for the various offices at stake. Throughout the day, there were reports that ballots were missing at some polling stations, particularly opposition ballots. Media reports did not attempt to quantify the scale of the problem, but anecdotally there were reports from places throughout the country of missing ballots, and party representatives filed complaints with the authorities. In a press conference, Interior Minister Anibal Fernandez asserted that, under Argentine law, it was incumbent upon the political parties to replenish their ballots at each polling station throughout the country.

Comment

18. (SBU) Analysts and pollsters had predicted a Kirchner win and an FPV majority in congress, and there were no big surprises today, except perhaps the strong opposition showing in major cities. CFK's victory over a divided opposition and the FPV's consolidation of its control of Congress should strengthen her claim to a strong mandate -- but that will depend on how much above 40% her final tally is. (A first round victory requires at least 40% of the vote plus at least a ten-point lead over the runner-up.)

WAYNE